

screening tests for Vietnam-era veterans enrolled in the VA system, and provide annual tests, upon request, to other veterans enrolled in the VA system. Further, it would require the VA to treat any enrolled veteran who tests positive for the Hepatitis C virus, regardless of service-connected disability status or priority group categorization. The VA would be required to provide at least one dedicated health care professional—a doctor and a nurse—at each VA Hospital for testing and treatment of this disease.

Veterans who request a liver biopsy or Hepatitis C genotype from VA would be able to receive those tests under this bill. Under the VA's current policy, veterans in some areas of the country have been denied access to these critical tests. And, VA staff would be provided with increased training options intended to improve the quality of care for veterans with Hepatitis C. Finally, the VA is encouraged to provide each VA hospital with one staff member, preferably trained in psychiatry, psychology or social work, to coordinate treatment options and other information with patients.

This bill would increase the amount of money dedicated to Hepatitis C testing and treatment, and would make sure these funds are spent where they are needed most. Beginning in FY01, the \$340 million in Hepatitis C funding would be shifted to the Specific Purpose account under the Veterans Health Administration, and will be dedicated solely for the purpose of paying for the costs associated with treating veterans with the Hepatitis C virus. The bill would allocate these funds to the 22 VISNs based on each VISN's Hepatitis C incidence rate, or the number of veterans infected with the virus. The VISNs will be allowed to use other funds to pay for the costs associated with Hepatitis C testing and treatment, but the \$340 million in the Specific Purpose account could be used to pay for the costs related to Hepatitis C care.

Finally, this bill will end the confusing patchwork of policies governing the care of veterans with Hepatitis C in each of the 22 VISNs. This legislation directs the VA to develop and implement a standardized, national Hepatitis C policy for its testing protocol, treatment options and education and notification efforts. The bill further directs the VA to develop a standard, specific Hepatitis C diagnosis code for measurement and treatment purposes. Finally, the VA must develop a national "reminder system" to alert untested veterans to the need and availability of Hepatitis C testing.

Mr. Speaker, many veterans do not even realize that they may be infected with the Hepatitis C virus, and the VA is doing little to encourage them to get the critical testing they need. The VA currently lacks a comprehensive national strategy for combating this deadly disease. With the passage of the Comprehensive Hepatitis C Health Care Act, veterans will finally be provided with access to testing and treatment that they have more than earned and deserve.

The VA has known about the problem of Hepatitis C since 1992. They have not acted, and they must not be allowed to continue to push this disease under the rug. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

## TEN YEARS AFTER, U.S. POLICY TOWARD KUWAIT STANDS THE TEST OF TIME

**HON. DOUG BEREUTER**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 7, 2000*

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, it was 10 years ago that the tiny Persian Gulf nation of Kuwait was invaded by Saddam Hussein's ruthless regime in Iraq. As a result of the exceptional leadership of President George Bush, the United States led a coalition of forces that soundly defeated the aggressor, and restored legitimate rule to Kuwait. At the time, the President's decision was heavily criticized by some; but the intervening decade has demonstrated that the decision to oppose Saddam Hussein was correct.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate for Members of this body to reflect on the risks that were involved in Operation Desert Storm. It was a remarkable achievement, made possible by the professionalism and dedication of our armed forces and those of our allies. In an era when politicians motives are cynically dissected by self-appointed pundits, we should be grateful that 10 years ago America stood against tyranny and barbarism.

Mr. Speaker, this Member would commend to his colleagues an editorial in the August 12, 2000, edition of the Omaha World-Herald. As this editorial correctly notes; "Operation Desert Storm prevented Iraq's dictator from spreading instability throughout the Middle East. Stopping that threat was an honorable cause of which Americans can be proud."

[From the Omaha World-Herald, Aug. 12, 2000]

### GULF WAR STANDS THE TEST

This month marks the 10-year anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which set the stage for the Persian Gulf War. That war has been dismissed in some circles as either a selfish and misguided attempt by the United States to maintain its dependence on foreign oil or, more cynically, as a chance for then-President George Bush to prove he was a tough guy. It was neither.

In the first place, maintaining access to gulf oil is a perfectly justifiable goal. Maintaining international access to any fundamental economic resource, and ensuring that the sea lanes remain open in one of the world's busiest maritime corridors, are legitimate security interests for the United States.

What many discussions of the Gulf War ignore is that by conquering Kuwait, Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was working toward dominating the entire Middle East. His next step would probably have been to threaten war against Israel or Saudi Arabia. The outcome of such a regional war could have been catastrophic.

Has Saddam been allowed to retain control of Kuwait—which was a sovereign country, after all—he would have reaped an enormous financial windfall by expropriating that nation's oil. With those funds, he could have strengthened his army, which was already the fourth-largest in the world, as well as his offensive missile program, which we now know included ambitious efforts to produce chemical and biological weapons.

Even before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Saddam made clear in a speech that he intended

to rain down "fire" on Israel—a reference widely interpreted at the time as a threat to bombard Israel with missiles. That threat became reality, of course, during the Gulf War.

The abuses perpetrated by Iraqi forces in Kuwait also demonstrated the ruthlessness of Saddam's regime. Iraqi soldiers killed at least 1,000 Kuwaiti civilians and operated at least two dozen torture sites in Kuwait City, David Scheffer, U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues, said this week. The Iraqis took thousands of hostages and used many of them as human shields. Saddam's forces, in other words, routinely and openly violated the Geneva Convention.

Additional evidence of Saddam's recklessness came in the final stages of the war, when he ordered his troops to set more than 500 Kuwait well heads on fire and open dozens of others so that more than 7 million gallons of oil spilled into the Persian Gulf.

It's true that, a decade later, Saddam's power is greatly reduced and it's increasingly hard to ignore the suffering of Iraqi civilians due to Saddam's manipulation of the international embargo.

But when it comes to the allies' action against Saddam during 1990-91, the expulsion of his forces from Kuwait was fully justified. Operation Desert Storm prevented Iraq's dictator from spreading instability throughout the Middle East. Stopping that threat was an honorable cause of which Americans can be proud.

## HONORING PAULETTA SMITH

**HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, September 7, 2000*

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I commemorate the dedicated public service that Pauletta Smith has given the City of Los Angeles.

Ms. Smith started her career with the City of Los Angeles on November 27, 1962 as a Clerk Typist with the Los Angeles Police Department. Two years later, she moved to the Bureau of Street Lighting and was promoted to Senior Clerk Typist. In 1975, Ms. Smith returned to the Police Department with the promotion to Personnel Aide and soon thereafter was again promoted, this time to the position of Exam Assistant. Due to her excellent work ethic and can-do attitude, Ms. Smith was again promoted to Administrative Aide in 1981 and, after only two short years, promoted to Administrative Assistant in 1983. Subsequently, her career carried her to the City's Department of Public Works, Department of Transportation, the Department of Telecommunications and the Department of General Services.

Pauletta Smith's diligent work was noticed in every assignment and in 1996 she transferred to the Office of the City Administrative Officer Emergency Preparedness Division as a Management Analyst II. She became an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator in October 1998 to oversee Citywide contingency planning for Year 2000 from which she is now retiring.

Ms. Smith has been an asset to her community, and I wish both her and her family as she joins others an active and enriching retirement.